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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/46/3)

AGENDA ITEM 83: INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION (A/46/3, A/46/266 and Add.1-E/1991/106 and Add.1, A/46/336, 344 and 520)

AGENDA ITEM 84: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (A/46/3, 288 and 306)

(a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR (A/46/568)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (A/46/217-E/1991/94, A/46/316, 369, 452, 457, 458 and 557)

AGENDA ITEM 85: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (A/46/396)

AGENDA ITEM 91: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REHABILITATION OF LIBERIA (A/46/403)

1. Mr. SPIERS (Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon (A/46/557), said that the report covered the efforts made by the United Nations system from 1 August 1990 to 30 July 1991 to address Lebanon's urgent humanitarian and development needs. Lebanon had undergone a profound change in the past year. The Lebanese National Assembly represented a Government of national unity and had ratified the Charter for National Reconciliation. The Government had consolidated and extended its authority and control, Beirut was unified and the militias had been dissolved. The Government and people were now focusing on rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. However, the prolonged period of strife had left behind a devastated and crippled country. The infrastructure had been severely disrupted and the economy shattered.

2. The international community had been prepared to be a partner in the reconstruction of Lebanon since 1975, as numerous General Assembly resolutions indicated. During the past several years, security conditions had limited the United Nations response to emergency and humanitarian needs. Many United Nations agencies and programmes, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) had served admirably in

(Mr. Spiers)

providing essential humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable population groups.

3. The Secretary-General's Trust Fund for Lebanon established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 33/146 had only been used to meet humanitarian needs while security conditions had not been conducive to reconstruction and development. Needs in the latter two areas had been addressed mainly by the programme of United Nations Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon (UNARDOL), directly through and in close cooperation with UNDRO, which had served as the focal point for relief assistance.

4. After summarizing the information contained in the report on the Government's reconstruction and development efforts (A/46/557, paras. 2-6), he said that the Inter-Agency Needs Assessment Mission dispatched to Lebanon in July had recently completed its task, and its findings had been forwarded to the Secretary-General. The Mission estimated that a $120.3 million technical assistance programme was required for immediate needs for up to three years, with an additional $111.9 million required for medium-term programmes extending to five years. A further $45 million was needed for food aid. After emergency assistance, the first priority was technical assistance programmes to rehabilitate Lebanon's infrastructure, followed closely by programmes to address urgent social and human concerns, reform the civil administration and revitalize the economy. The Government of Lebanon also hoped to mobilize its own resources and attract private capital. Estimated capital requirements for a few select sectors, to assist with chiefly telecommunications, electricity, water supply and environment, as well as education and agriculture, totalled slightly over $3.7 billion.

5. A senior United Nations/UNDP official would soon be appointed resident representative and UNARDOL coordinator to review the situation in Lebanon and make recommendations concerning the expansion of the United Nations presence there. The Secretary-General would shortly arrange a pledging conference for the Trust Fund for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon and, on the basis of his firm commitment to the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/225, called upon the international community to provide the financial support needed to assist Lebanon on its road to recovery.

6. Mr. BLANCA (Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the review of the capacity, experience and coordination arrangements in the United Nations system for humanitarian assistance (A/46/568), said that a succession of recent disasters had highlighted the important role of the Organization in providing leadership to the international community in anticipating and dealing with emergencies.

7. A major factor limiting the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to emergencies was inadequate financing, as UNHCR, UNDRO and many other United Nations organizations which provided humanitarian assistance and

(Mr. Blanca)

were also involved in development activities could attest; they frequently faced budgetary shortfalls and relied for the bulk of their funds on voluntary contributions mobilized for each emergency. The need for adequate resources was particularly critical in the initial phase of an emergency when casualties and damage tended to be the greatest. Donor Governments must therefore work closely with the United Nations system to ensure that the requisite financial support was available.

8. The United Nations system must also develop adequate stand-by capacities which could be rapidly activated in response to an emergency. At present, critical delays occurred in the mobilization of funds, food and other relief supplies and in the deployment of staff to administer and monitor the delivery of assistance. A well-coordinated system-wide stand-by capacity which could be readily mobilized by the Secretary-General was needed, and he should be able to draw upon the relief capacities of Governments, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations.

9. It was also essential to ensure a clear division of responsibilities, particularly in the case of major complex emergencies, given the inherent overlap in the mandates of United Nations organizations providing humanitarian assistance. Although UNDRO had been established as the focal point in the United Nations system for the provision of assistance in the event of sudden natural disasters and other emergency situations, the magnitude and complexity of recent emergencies had made the direct leadership of the Secretary-General necessary. He had exercised that role by establishing ad hoc operations to coordinate the international community's response. However, an inevitable consequence of such arrangements had been the diffusion of coordination responsibilities, since each operation tended to have a different structure, operating procedure and modality for launching appeals. Moreover, emergencies sometimes had to be widely publicized by the media before donors provided the resources needed to initiate ad hoc operations. Greater coordination within the United Nations system was therefore needed. Coordination was equally important at the national level: affected countries had frequently expressed the desire to deal with a single United Nations coordinator or focal point at the country level which had the authority and capacity to mobilize multilateral and bilateral assistance.

10. It was also necessary to ensure that emergency assistance was provided in ways that would directly support recovery and long-term development. Emergency measures should be viewed as an initial step towards the solution of longer-term problems and should not create new patterns of dependency, undermine incentives to local production or make unsustainable demands on future resources. Development assistance organizations of the United Nations system should therefore work closely with those responsible for emergency relief and recovery from an early stage in the operation.

11. Finally, while the United Nations must continue to provide humanitarian assistance in an effective manner, it must also devote greater attention to

addressing the root causes of such emergencies, and every member of the international community must do its part to facilitate that effort.

12. Mr. ESSAAFI (United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator) said that he would focus on agenda items 84 (a) and 83. The need to enhance the role of the United Nations system in providing humanitarian assistance and the organizational and financial constraints facing the system had been graphically demonstrated during the past two years. To facilitate the discussion, two informal papers prepared by his Office had been circulated among the Committee members. The first contained factual information on UNDRO and the second, entitled "UNDRO in the 1990s", presented a strategy for the strengthening of his Office.

13. The discussion of organizational issues relating to humanitarian assistance at the most recent session of the Economic and Social Council had been fruitful and had reaffirmed UNDRO's own analysis of the situation, which was examined in detail in the paper entitled "UNDRO in the 1990s".

14. The various documents before the Committee on the activities undertaken within the framework of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction indicated that political authorities, scientific organizations and United Nations agencies had formed a unique partnership to combat natural hazards in order to prevent them from becoming disasters. The close relationship that was developing between the Decade secretariat and UNDRO augured well for the future. He hoped that the Committee would support the precise Decade-related targets and functions described in the documents before it. In particular, financing was urgently needed for the projects endorsed by the Scientific and Technical Committee, and the call for a global meeting in 1994 of national committees for the Decade under the auspices of the General Assembly warranted careful consideration.

15. Proper mitigation efforts were of critical importance in saving lives and property when disaster struck. While long-term trends as to the frequency and intensity of future hazards were difficult to predict, certain hazards could be expected to increase as a result of climate change brought about by natural and man-made causes. It was imperative that sufficient resources should be mobilized to support disaster-mitigation programmes, particularly in view of their close link to developmental and environmental issues. Such programmes were not costly when compared with the billions of dollars of damage they could prevent. The Decade secretariat should also be strengthened, as its current level of resources would not permit it to carry out the tasks entrusted to it.

16. Although many resolutions, and especially General Assembly resolution 45/221, called for the strengthening of UNDRO, UNDRO currently received a smaller allocation for established posts from the regular budget of the United Nations than it had in 1980, a situation that impaired its ability to discharge its mandate. Fortunately, UNDRO had also received strong

(Mr. Essaafi)

extrabudgetary support from some Member States which would fund nearly half the Office's staff, 80 per cent of its communications needs and 99 per cent of its operations in the coming biennium. However, that was an insufficient base for the future development of the Office, particularly in view of the significant progress it had made during the past two years. UNDRO had expanded its disaster-management training efforts, was upgrading its information management systems, and had professionalized its disaster relief operations. Moreover, UNDRO called an inter-agency committee meeting in Geneva to deal with each disaster. Increasingly, the Office had been able to respond to requests from Governments for technical advice and assistance for mitigation and relief activities; it was involved in important disaster telecommunications programmes and in the establishment of an inter-agency roster of disaster specialists, and it had strengthened its relations with non-governmental organizations and the media.

17. While performance was not necessarily contingent upon the availability of resources, it was impossible if resources were unavailable. Disaster relief and mitigation were high on the agenda of Member States. Accordingly, he suggested that the established posts currently funded from extrabudgetary resources should be absorbed into the regular budget as a way of securing funding for staff positions and attracting experts. That would not prejudice other organizational arrangements designed to strengthen the humanitarian sector in general.

18. The question of the future activities and strengthening of UNDRO had been discussed at the fourth International Meeting of National Emergency Relief Services convened by UNDRO with the participation of 34 countries. The results of that meeting had been taken into account in the paper "UNDRO in the 1990s".

19. He thanked the Governments which had consistently supported his Office's efforts to fulfil its mandate. The UNDRO staff was dedicated, professional and productive, and he hoped that with the further support of Member States, the Office would be able to play an even more important role in future efforts of the United Nations system to provide emergency humanitarian assistance.

20. Mr. JONAH (Under-Secretary-General Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship) began by introducing the report of the Secretary-General on special assistance to front-line States and other bordering States (A/46/369) prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 45/224, noting that the basic purpose of such assistance was set forth in General Assembly resolution 41/199. The report contained information from Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system, and other international organizations on their assistance activities.

21. The report on emergency assistance to the Sudan and Operation Lifeline Sudan (A/46/452) had been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 45/226. The past year had been a dramatic one in the Sudan: in addition to

(Mr. Jonah)

the continuing civil war, the country had been affected by a drought which had threatened the lives of almost 8 million people. In March 1991, the Secretary-General had launched a consolidated appeal for emergency assistance totalling more than $700 million, including 1.2 million tons of food aid and $30 million in non-food assistance. The international community had responded generously and, despite serious logistical difficulties, the emergency programme had succeeded in averting a massive tragedy. Technical discussions on the extension of Operation Lifeline Sudan had been initiated and were still in progress. Meanwhile, relief supplies were being delivered to the conflict zone on the basis of ad hoc arrangements coordinated by the United Nations. In view of the Government's assurances that internally displaced persons were being voluntarily relocated and resettled, the international community had become increasingly willing to provide basic services for those relocated and resettled.

22. The terms of reference of the Secretary-General's report on emergency assistance to Somalia (A/46/457), prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 45/229, had been rendered obsolete by subsequent events. The focus of the United Nations response had shifted from the emergency needs identified by a 1989 inter-agency mission to those caused by civil conflict. By the end of 1990, the security situation in Somalia had deteriorated to such an extent that all foreign diplomatic missions and international organizations had been forced to evacuate. Subsequently, in April 1991, the Secretary-General had authorized the re-establishment of a limited United Nations presence in the country in order to carry out emergency humanitarian relief activities as soon as circumstances permitted Several assessment missions had taken place, and preliminary estimates of overall requirements had been brought to the attention of the international community. While security conditions still precluded country-wide emergency relief operations, the United Nations stood ready to initiate such operations as soon as the situation permitted.

23. The report of the Secretary-General on international assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola (A/46/396), prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 45/233, outlined the assistance provided by organizations of the United Nations system and other donors. Once again, the terms of reference of the resolution had to some extent been overtaken by developments. Thus, the focus had shifted to emergency humanitarian assistance provided under the Special Relief Programme for Angola launched in November 1990, for which the Secretary-General had issued a renewed appeal on 28 March 1991. Consultations were currently under way to assess requirements for the coming year, and it was expected that a further appeal would be issued in the coming weeks so as to enable the Programme to continue until the end of 1992. In addition, in support of the peace agreement signed on 1 May 1991 between the Government of Angola and UNITA, the United Nations had launched a special programme to feed the demobilized combatants in Angola.

24. The Secretary-General's report on emergency assistance for the economic and social rehabilitation of Liberia (A/46/403) had been prepared in response

(Mr. Jonah)

to General Assembly resolution 45/232. On 5 December 1990, the Secretary-General had launched a $14.4 million appeal to cover the critical first months of a resumed emergency relief operation in the Monrovia area. Following consultations with the various parties involved, it had been agreed that the United Nations should expand the emergency relief programme to cover the entire country. Following an inter-agency assessment mission, a country-wide emergency programme had been formulated for the period July 1991-July 1992, and the Secretary-General had issued an appeal for $135.6 million to cover its costs. The report contained information on the response by Member States and other donors to that appeal.

25. Turning to the question of the critical humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa, which fell under agenda item 12 but had been deferred for consideration under the present cluster of items, he said that the overthrow of the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia in May and June 1991 had resulted in substantial refugee flows in various directions. The Secretary-General had immediately called an emergency meeting at Abuja, Nigeria, which had led to a mission to the area. Subsequently, in response to donors and Member States, he had instituted the Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa (SEPHA). An office had been established for the Programme, and some of the donors' conditions had been met. A consolidated inter-agency appeal had been launched and the first situation report published, with a further report expected soon.

26. Although calm now prevailed in Ethiopia, serious logistical problems had been encountered in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, especially to the Ogaden region. The ports of Djibouti and Aseb were seriously congested, and the World Food Programme had taken steps to ease that congestion.

27. Efforts had been made to deal with the effects on the Sudan of the events in Ethiopia. Following those events, many Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia had returned to their own country. Since the roads had been impassable, it had been necessary to launch a costly programme of air-drops in order to deliver humanitarian assistance to the refugees. He had recently participated in talks with a view to reopening the old Operation Lifeline Sudan land corridors, as well as some new land corridors. Some progress had been made, but political factors had intervened. Nevertheless, everything possible was being done to reduce the cost of delivery of humanitarian assistance.

28. There was reason for concern at the lack of response to the appeal launched by the Secretary-General on 16 September 1991. The situation in the Sudan was once again critical: all the food aid pledged was now running out, and there was an urgent need for further assistance. While grain was generally available, other foods necessary for a balanced diet were in short supply, resulting in high levels of malnutrition in the area. He therefore wished to reiterate the Secretary-General's latest appeal for resources in support of SEPHA.

(Mr. Jonah)

29. Joint assessment teams were currently being set up to visit the Horn of Africa, to ensure that the international community would be better able to cope with the situation in 1992. FAO projections already suggested that there would be very considerable needs in 1992, albeit not on the same scale as in 1991. Furthermore, the Secretary-General had been able to improve coordination within the United Nations, both at Headquarters and in the field. It was thus to be hoped that, with a combination of improved coordination and a quicker response on the part of donors, it would be possible to bring succour to the suffering people of the Horn of Africa.

30. Mr. ZUMBADO (Assistant Administrator, United Nations Development Programme), speaking in his capacity as Coordinator of the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America, introduced the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Special Plan (A/46/458). The progress made in the execution of the Special Plan over the past 12 months had doubtless been stimulated by the significant advances made in bringing peace, democratization and institutional consolidation to the region. Nevertheless, final agreements had still to be reached on a negotiated settlement to the armed conflicts, just as obstacles still remained to the consolidation of democratic processes.

31. In 1990 the Central American economies had continued to be characterized to various degrees by recession and macroeconomic disequilibria, and poverty had been widespread. The situation in Central America thus posed great challenges for economic and social development and for the relaunching of the integration process. At a succession of summit meetings, the Central American Presidents had drawn up priorities for the economic and social development of the region, which were reflected in the Central American Economic Plan of Action. At the summit meeting scheduled to be held at Tegucigalpa in December 1991 they would be setting concrete goals for the alleviation of poverty in the region, according special attention to the problems of human development, young children and youth.

32. In that context, the general objectives of the Special Plan remained valid, a fact confirmed by the General Assembly's decision in its resolution 45/231 to renew the mandate of the Special Plan for three years. In addition, the UNDP Governing Council had provided for $20 million in additional budget appropriations to allow UNDP to continue to provide support to Central America under the Special Plan from January 1992.

33. Central America's new economic and social agenda posed new challenges for the Special Plan. The Central American Governments had recently approved a revised strategy for the Plan, described in paragraphs 13-17 of the Secretary-General's report. Other initiatives were also being developed in the framework of the Special Plan, through ad hoc mechanisms or parallel contributions. Those initiatives included a subregional payments programme sponsored by the European Economic Community and the initiative coordinated by WHO and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) entitled "Health and Peace

(Mr. Zumbado)

towards Development and Democracy". Recently, additional resources had been mobilized for the forestry sector through the Tropical Forestry Action Plan for Central America.

34. Details regarding technical assistance projects were to be found in paragraph 16 of the report. Particular attention should be drawn to the projects described in paragraphs 28, 30, 57 and 60.

35. The strategy for the Special Plan over the next three years focused on four priority areas: assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons; poverty reduction; the environment and sustainable development of natural resources; and private sector policies and activities. Assistance to uprooted populations would continue to be a key theme of the Special Plan, with emphasis placed on development projects; such assistance would be closely linked to national peace initiatives. UNHCR and UNDP continued to support the Plan of Action of the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA), and an international meeting with donors would be convened in March 1992.

36. In the area of poverty alleviation, UNDP had financed a project prepared by the World Bank in association with WHO/PAHO, the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP) and UNESCO to set up a regional technical cooperation body to improve the efficiency and fairness of public expenditure, and target the poorest groups more effectively. That body would provide technical advice and training to broaden and improve the financing and delivery of social services, particularly basic education, primary health care and nutrition.

37. In the area of the environment and natural resources, projects for sustainable development were being promoted, with particular attention accorded to strengthening the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD). Technical support was also being provided to the forestry sector and to the drafting and implementation of agro-forestry activities to increase small farmers' productivity and promote the conservation of natural resources.

38. Another priority was the creation of a framework conducive to private sector development. UNDP was encouraging a number of initiatives jointly with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the International Trade Centre and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) dealing with industrial modernization, technological development, trade, and services, with emphasis on expanding exports.

39. In implementing the strategy for the Special Plan, UNDP would continue to focus on coordinating assistance with other bilateral and multilateral programmes with a view to securing the greatest possible complementarity and impact for the benefit of Central America. UNDP was also coordinating

management of the Special Plan with technical cooperation programmes and projects financed at the national level in each country, thereby extending successful national experiences to the regional scale while ensuring that regional projects strengthened national initiatives in each of the participating countries.

40. Mr. HAMILTON (Acting Director, International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction secretariat) said that the Decade secretariat had undertaken a survey of priorities and gaps in technical knowledge at the national level as the basis for developing Decade programmes. To date, about 100 national committees or focal points had been established in response to the call by the General Assembly. The meeting of Latin American countries that had preceded the recent session of the Scientific and Technical Committee in Guatemala, had stimulated the formation of several new committees and had contributed to the formulation of guidelines for regional cooperation for disaster mitigation. About one quarter of the relevant national entities had provided information about their disaster mitigation plans, and the number of Decade-related activities was growing steadily. Yet while the situation was encouraging in terms of commitment, specific measures for disaster mitigation were still only at the identification phase in many countries.

41. The Inter-Agency Working Group and Steering Committee had met at Geneva in July 1991. The participants had identified numerous activities for furthering the Decade, including the establishment of a directory of disaster-related information systems and databases, compilation of an inventory of Decade-related projects, examination of the economic aspects of disaster mitigation strategies, and preparation of information for national committees. The Steering Committee had endorsed the Working Group's conclusions, and the Decade secretariat was currently obtaining the resources needed to undertake the programme of work thus outlined.

42. The Scientific and Technical Committee had held its first session at Bonn in March 1991 and its second in Guatemala City in September 1991, with financial support from Japan and the assistance of the Pan American Health Organization. The Committee's first annual report, which identified targets, strategies and international demonstration projects for the Decade, appeared as an annex to document A/46/266/Add.1.

43. The membership of the Special High-Level Council had been announced by the Secretary-General on 6 September 1991, and the Council had met for the first time on 9 October 1991, the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction. The major topics of discussion had been "Natural disaster reduction and development" and "Awareness of policy-makers and role of the media". The session had concluded with the adoption of the New York Declaration (A/46/266/Add.1, annex I), which constituted a significant step towards raising awareness of the importance of decisive action in vulnerable countries to reduce the impact of disasters.

(Mr. Hamilton)

44. With regard to the Decade secretariat itself, funds provided by the Government of Finland were being used to hire an economist, who would begin work in January 1992. There were also prospects for the loan of a senior earthquake engineer, the secondment of a junior professional and the recruitment of a public information specialist during the coming months. If those services could be obtained, the augmented staff would considerably increase the secretariat's capabilities. However, the secretariat still required an additional secretary, an administrative assistant, and, most importantly, long-term support for a Director and Deputy Director.

45. In the area of public information, three bimonthly issues of the Decade newsletter had already appeared. Following a recommendation by the United Nations Publications Board, the secretariat had organized a competition among national organizations to choose a logo for the Decade. The Publications Board had chosen the winning design, which was being circulated among delegations at the current meeting.

46. Although the Decade was moving ahead, resources commensurate with the needs deriving from the Framework of Action specified by General Assembly resolution 44/236 must now be provided. The resources currently available for the Decade were insufficient either to build the secretariat's staff to a level that would provide adequate support to participants or to plan more than a few months ahead.

47. It was clear that most Member States that were willing to support Decade-related projects preferred to do so on a bilateral basis. While several Member States had generously funded specific Decade-related events, there appeared to be a general reluctance to provide the financing necessary to sustain the basic administrative staff and the operational costs of the secretariat. However, the Decade was making good progress and deserved continued support. Such support could be classified as sustaining support and project support.

48. Sustaining support would cover costs relating to the secretariat and would enable it to service the Scientific and Technical Comittee and the Special High-Level Council. The salaries of the secretariat staff would be included, as would the operational expenses of the office and the costs of convening one meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee and the Special High-Level Council at Geneva each year. The total requirement would be $1-2 million a year, depending on the activity level. It would be desirable for the support to be broadly based, which could be ensured if 10 countries each pledged an average of $100,000-$200,000 per year for the remaining eight years of the Decade.

49. Project support would fund special projects or events in which Member States had a particular interest, including the secondment of staff to the secretariat, special activities undertaken by the secretariat, meetings of the Council and the Committee outside Geneva, especially in developing countries,

a second meeting per year of the Committee, regional or topical meetings in preparation for the proposed world conference and special activities by Council or Committee members on behalf of the Decade. He hoped that the Second Committee would give urgent consideration to his proposal, as the current pace of Decade activities could not be sustained without such commitment.

50. Mr. LOUP (Coordinator of Assistance to the Least Developed Countries, United Nations Development Programme) drew attention to document A/46/316 containing the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Summary reports on Chad and Djibouti", which had been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 45/223 and 45/228. The reports were based mainly on information provided by the Governments of the two countries through the UNDP field offices there.

51. In Chad, internal strife and natural disasters had for many years hampered reconstruction and development efforts, and the situation remained difficult. For the second successive year, drought had given rise to food shortages. A substantial number of former refugees had returned to Chad and were in need of assistance; moreover, internal migration had strained local resources and facilities. Earlier in 1991 there had been an outbreak of cholera. Various United Nations offices, programmes and agencies had provided assistance over the past year to alleviate the food situation and to meet health needs. The Third Round-table Conference of Donors to Chad had been held at Geneva in June 1990. Following the Conference, a number of sectoral consultations had been launched.

52. As for Djibouti, events in the Horn of Africa had caused the country to experience an influx of refugees and displaced persons and had disrupted its traditional trade with neighbouring countries. Djibouti was also coping with the economic impact of the Gulf crisis and the effects of the disastrous floods of April 1989. Djibouti's planning priorities were being modified in the light of the country's vulnerability to external events: efforts were being made to expand and diversify the country's economic activities and to attract additional investment capital. Moreover, the Government wished to ensure that the necessary measures were taken to minimize and alleviate the social costs that might result from economic restructuring.

53. The Secretary-General had also submitted a report on a number of initiatives taken by the United Nations system in response to General Assembly resolution 45/222 to assist the Government of Yemen (A/46/217). Since the preparation of that report, UNDP had proposed a $245 million programme for Yemen, of which $86 million was to be provided in credits and grants, through the World Bank emergency recovery project, to assist returning migrant workers. To date, $60 million had been provided, including $33 million in International Development Association (IDA) financing, $15 million from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and $4.5 million from Germany. UNDP had also provided $400,000 in Special Programme Resources

(Mr. Loup)

to help Yemen's project management unit coordinate the emergency recovery project and was assisting the Yemeni Government in identifying its needs and in mobilizing the necessary resources. To that end, a meeting with donors was scheduled to be held in May 1992 at Geneva.

54. Mrs. ten TUSSCHER (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the recent unprecedented number of man-made and natural disasters in the world had caused tremendous suffering and loss of life, forcing millions of people to flee their homes. Developing countries were particularly disaster-prone, since many emergencies had their root causes in poverty, environmental degradation and civil or international conflicts, and their impact was aggravated by the limited capacity of developing countries to cope with their consequences. The European Community and its member States had stretched their emergency aid budgets to the maximum in an endeavour to respond adequately to the needs of disaster victims.

55. There was a pressing need for a coordinated approach to disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and relief, and it was disappointing, therefore, that the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction had still failed to generate lasting and practical results. Appropriate administrative arrangements were necessary to enable the Decade secretariat to carry out its mandate fully, and she hoped that the newly appointed Special High-Level Council would contribute to that goal. In particular, measures were required to help disaster-prone countries set up their own disaster mitigation programmes, which would dramatically reduce the loss of life and property.

56. Efforts to improve the coordination of United Nations humanitarian emergency assistance must focus on enhancing the role of UNDRO in all areas of disaster work. In view of the linkages with the overall development process and the coordinating role of UNDP in the field, close cooperation with UNDP was vital. The joint UNDP-UNDRO Disaster Management Training Programme would greatly assist national authorities in their efforts to integrate disaster mitigation into national development plans.

57. The United Nations had a valuable role to play in all emergency situations, as evidenced by operations currently under way in Liberia, Angola and Central America. Negotiating efforts by the Special Coordinator for the Horn of Africa and his Deputy had been instrumental in opening up new corridors of relief in that part of the world.

58. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) said that, as a particularly disaster-prone country subject to severe earthquakes, flooding, volcanic eruptions, landslides and droughts, Chile had received extensive humanitarian assistance from other countries and the relevant agencies of the United Nations system. Such assistance was vital to the developing countries, which lacked the means necessary for an adequate response to natural disasters, and his delegation therefore attached great importance to the activities of the United Nations

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

Disaster Relief Coordinator and to the adoption of international measures for rapid assistance.

59. Chile had adopted measures at the highest level to promote the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. A special committee on the observance of the Decade had been established and was working in conjunction with public bodies, the armed forces and the police to heighten the Chilean people's awareness of the need for preventive measures. In addition, a comprehensive, country-wide disaster response system had been established in Chile, and bilateral and multilateral agreements had been concluded with other countries on mutual assistance to deal with disasters.

60. His delegation called on other countries and international agencies with experience in natural disaster work to assist disaster-prone countries in setting up their own adequate response systems.

61. Mr. GUERRERO (Philippines) said that while many natural disasters defied prediction, some, particularly those caused by man, could be avoided and others were predictable. Ideally, however, preparations could be made for all disasters. The necessary technology and resources should be made available to the developing nations to enable them to cope adequately with emergency situations, for it was vital that growth and development should continue to be pursued in the aftermath of disasters.

62. His delegation hailed the decision by the United Nations to designate the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and called for efforts to optimize the role played by the Organization in disaster prevention and preparedness, emergency management, rehabilitation and ongoing development efforts in afflicted areas. Particular importance must be attached to the coordination and integration of the disaster-related activities of the Organization's various agencies to ensure maximum effectiveness in the shortest possible time and the optimal utilization of available resources.

63. The Philippines was a particularly disaster-prone country and in the past two years had been devastated by typhoons, floods, a major earthquake and the eruption of Mount Pinatubo, causing damage equivalent to 16.8 per cent of the country's average yearly budget. The effects of those disasters had been further compounded by the social and economic impact of the 1990 Gulf crisis, which had left 70,000 Filippino workers unemployed and stranded in the conflict area. His country was grateful to the United Nations agencies and to other States for their generous response to those emergencies.

64. Certain measures would considerably enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations response to natural disasters. A swifter assessment of the gravity of a disaster and the communication of that information to the relevant United Nations agencies and programmes, specifying the aid required, would avoid overlapping and unnecessary costs. An overall coordinator,

(Mr. Guerrero, Philippines)

assisted by a specific project officer, might be appointed to oversee an integrated United Nations response, releasing the UNDP resident representative from the duty of coordinating relief activities at the country level. Donor countries might contribute to a larger disaster fund for the provision of United Nations relief, administered by the Secretary-General through a special coordinator, without prejudice to any country's decision to send additional funds to the afflicted country should it deem such funding warranted. Finally, he stressed the importance of pursuing rehabilitation and development programmes after natural emergencies, since the capacity of any country either to prevent or to be prepared for a disaster was determined by its level of development. Assistance from the international community would be vital for such programmes.

65. Mr. GEBREMEDHIN (Ethiopia) said that his delegation shared the views of the Secretary-General concerning the problems faced by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) and the need for enhanced coordination within the United Nations system. Even at a time when disaster situations had been increasing around the world, the resource needs of the Office had not been met. Not only had the budget failed to reflect real requirements, but since the 1980s, it had also been subject to the zero growth rule, which had contributed to a further deterioration of response capacity. While extrabudgetary funds had provided UNDRO with some flexibility, there had been a lack of staff to manage such funds. It was therefore unrealistic to focus solely on the coordination problems of UNDRO or of the system as a whole while ignoring such tangible constraints.

66. UNDRO had become neither a focal point nor an effective coordinator of system-wide emergency assistance. Accordingly, in view of the continued relevance of its mission, efforts must be made to strengthen UNDRO so as to ensure that the system responded automatically when disaster struck. Furthermore, disaster mitigation measures must focus on prevention as well as on preparedness.

67. Ethiopia continued to suffer from the cumulative effects of natural and man-made disasters. In the past several years, both drought and a decades-old civil war had claimed many lives. Resources had been squandered and production had been hampered. As a result, more than 9 million people were currently in need of emergency assistance. In addition, the country was currently hosting more than 500,000 refugees.

68. The Secretary-General had recently launched a consolidated appeal designed to raise $400 million to meet the needs of more than 22 million people in the Horn of Africa from September to December 1991. So far, only $110 million, or 23 per cent of the total, had been raised. Unless assistance arrived in time, many of those affected would be at serious risk. While expressing gratitude for the assistance provided thus far, he urged the donor community to finalize its pledges. He also reaffirmed his Government's commitment to facilitating the unhindered delivery of emergency assistance.

69. Mr. PARIENTEC (Panama) said that since December 1989, when a democratically elected Government had taken office in his country, a difficult process of economic and social reconstruction had been initiated through extensive structural adjustment measures. The Central American countries had been among the first members of the international community to re-establish diplomatic relations with Panama. In April 1990, the Central American Presidents, meeting at Montelimar, Nicaragua, had formally invited Panama to take part in the regional integration and development process. A decision in that regard had been adopted by consensus at the presidential summit meeting held at San Salvador, El Salvador, in July 1991.

70. Since the 1950s, Panama had participated in various regional forums and had maintained trade links with other Central American countries through bilateral and international agreements. It was also taking part in various international cooperation programmes, including the United Nations Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America. While Panama had not been included as a beneficiary country in General Assembly resolution 42/231, which had established the Special Plan, it participated in all of the intraregional coordination machanisms, especially the meeting of Central American Vice-Presidents. The 14th meeting of deputy ministers overseeing the implementation of the Special Plan had been held in August 1991 at Panama City.

71. Among the regional projects to which Panama was contributing were the RUTA II expansion project, which provided technical assistance to the agriculture and livestock sector of various countries, and joint projects with the Governments of El Salvador and Nicaragua in the electricity and agricultural sectors, respectively.

72. Panama fully supported the revised strategy of the Special Plan, which placed emphasis on social development, particularly health and poverty alleviation, and on external cooperation programmes. In view of the activities which it had undertaken and the support which it received from the five other Central American countries, Panama requested to be included as the sixth beneficiary country of the Special Plan.

73. Mr. WANG Xinggen (China) said that his country was prone to natural disasters. During 1991, 24 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities had been struck by flood, drought, earthquake or other calamities; as a result, 3,074 people had been killed and 61,000 injured. Direct economic losses amounted to more than $15 billion.

74. The Chinese Government had provided large amounts of emergency assistance, both in cash and in kind, to the affected areas. Chinese living around the world and the international community had also responded quickly and generously, and he expressed appreciation for the assistance provided.

75. Since the launching of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, some 90 countries had established national committees for disaster mitigation, which were helping their respective Governments to prepare

(Mr. Wang Xinggen, China)

disaster-prevention programmes and providing information and recommendations to government agencies and other relevant organizations.

76. Natural disaster reduction was of vital importance to developing countries because their economic infrastructures were fragile. When disasters occurred, those countries faced not only great losses, but also enormous difficulties in rehabilitation and reconstruction. Accordingly, the establishment of an early-warning system for natural disasters was crucial. China supported the efforts of the Scientific and Technical Committee to apply modern technology to disaster reduction and to promote the establishment of such a system. It also supported the trust fund for the Decade and encouraged those countries which were in a position to do so to contribute to it.

77. While the secretariat for the Decade had made a valuable contribution to the implementation of various programmes, his Government believed that a small and efficient secretariat was preferable to a large and cumbersome one. The existing United Nations structures and facilities should be fully utilized so as to avoid duplication and overlapping. It was essential to focus on enhancing the disaster-mitigation capacity of developing countries in order to foster their self-reliance.

78. Mr. MILINTACHINDA (Thailand) said that no country was safe from natural disasters. In 1988 and 1989, sudden floods in southern Thailand had caused torrential rain and typhoons, resulting in massive destruction of lives and property. Assistance to the stricken areas had been provided by the Thai Government, Thai private agencies and UNDRO. Short- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes in the two most seriously affected villages had been partially supported by contributions from UNDP.

79. His Government attached great importance to international cooperation in natural disaster reduction and, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/169, had established a national committee for coordination with the United Nations in that area. Thailand had also provided food, medicine and cash to flood victims in Maldives, Cambodia and China and to the victims of the Pinatubo volcano eruption in the Philippines.

80. For developing countries, reducing the losses caused by disasters was of vital importance. However, as noted by the Secretary-General, in document A/46/266, the situation of the trust fund was far from satisfactory, and urgent action was necessary if the activities of the Decade were to be supported. His delegation encouraged donor countries to contribute to the fund so that the annual target of $3 million might be reached.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
27th meeting
held on
Thursday, 31 October 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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14 November 1991
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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/46/3)

AGENDA ITEM 83: INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION (continued) (A/46/3, A/46/266 and Add.1-E/1991/106 and Add.1, A/46/336, A/46/520)

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(a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR (continued)

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AGENDA ITEM 85: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (continued) (A/46/396)

AGENDA ITEM 91: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REHABILITATION OF LIBERIA (continued) (A/46/403)

1. Mr. FLORES BERMUDEZ (Honduras), speaking also on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, noted the devastating effects of recent natural disasters such as the earthquake which had struck the north-east of Iran in June 1990, the cyclone which had swept through Bangladesh, the eruption of the Mount Pinatubo volcano in the Philippines and the floods which had caused the evacuation of 4 million people in China. Such occurrences had particularly disastrous consequences for developing countries whose economy was inherently fragile and which therefore found the assistance of the United Nations and other donors indispensable. In that connection, it was important to acknowledge the excellent work done by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), other United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations.

2. The various functions performed by UNDRO since its establishment had been intensified during the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, particularly the coordination and exchange of information on relief needs and contributions from donors, the mobilization and coordination of relief offered by various organizations within the United Nations system, the organization of missions to assess needs resulting from disasters, the mobilization of emergency supplies and advice to Governments on the incorporation of disaster prevention elements in rehabilitation programmes. Such activities, carried out in effective collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, were described in the Secretary-General's report on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (A/46/266). It was also important to point out that at the second session of 1991 of the Scientific and Technical Committee for the Decade it had been acknowledged that a relationship existed between the prevention and mitigation of disasters and the environment and development.

(Mr. Flores Bermudez, Honduras)

3. The countries of Central America considered that, in order to coordinate relief, a standing central coordination arrangement should be established in the United Nations system which would be capable of taking automatic decisions at the highest level, to ensure efficient information management and maintain close cooperation with the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations. Such a mechanism should also re-evaluate the role of the UNDP Resident Representative as a representative of UNDRO.

4. With regard to disaster prevention and rehabilitation training, the Central American countries welcomed the ambitious training programme being conducted by UNDRO with the support of UNDP and would be pleased to see such training extended to staff in the national offices of public and private organizations working in the field of humanitarian and relief assistance. It was also to be hoped that guidance contained in the UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Manual would be implemented and that it would be included in the activities set up by the International Search and Rescue Workshop, held in 1991, and the 1990 international conference on disaster communications.

5. One of the fundamental problems facing UNDRO was the shortage of financial resources to meet the continual demands made on it. In acknowledgement of that problem, various resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had called for the strengthening of UNDRO resources. The Central American countries had supported resolution 45/221 and reaffirmed their willingness to support any draft resolution aimed at allocating more funds to UNDRO so that it could carry out its mandate in an appropriate way.

6. Thanks were due to the donors who had given financial aid in emergency situations in Central America. However, the resources available had not been sufficient to meet the needs arising from those situations. Among other measures taken in the region, he welcomed the implementation of regional projects such as the one relating to a network of silos to store basic grains, but those efforts required additional aid from the international community in order to raise the levels of protection and prevention of the effects of natural disasters and emergency situations.

7. Mr. CARMICHAEL (Canada) regretted that natural and man-made disasters continued to hinder the efforts of developing countries to foster a sustainable process of long-term development. Although United Nations organizations had provided considerable disaster relief in those situations, improved coordination would greatly enhance the effectiveness of the efforts.

8. In connection with the man-made disaster situations in Angola and Liberia, he pointed out that, in view of the peace process which was under way in Angola, Canada was currently considering a grant towards the United Nations Joint Appeal for emergency assistance for demobilizing soldiers in that country. As for Liberia, since the beginning of 1991 Canada had provided approximately $11 million in humanitarian and food relief assistance for

(Mr. Carmichael, Canada)

Liberian refugees and displaced persons and, depending on events, would consider the provision of further humanitarian assistance.

9. Mr. MAHMOUD (Lebanon) highlighted several aspects of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon" (A/46/557), in particular the establishment of a Government of national unity as a result of the Taif Agreement, the disarmament of the militias, the expansion of government authority over most of the territory of Lebanon, and the adoption of constitutional reforms by the Parliament. It was expected that the new Board of the Council for Development and Reconstruction would establish extensive plans in that field and make proposals for seeking suitable financial resources.

10. It was estimated that the destruction of Lebanon had displaced 900,000 persons, around one third of the population, and a further 400,000 people were unable to meet their most basic needs. Unemployment was estimated to be as high as 30 per cent and inflation at over 60 per cent. Conservative estimates put the cumulative damage sustained by Lebanon during the past 16 years at a minimum of $25 billion and comprehensive reconstruction and development of the country would cost much more.

11. His delegation understood the concern about the safety of United Nations personnel expressed in the report of the Secretary-General, but hoped that the organization would maintain an effective and substantial presence in Lebanon at a time when technical and financial assistance were so urgently needed.

12. The Government and people of Lebanon appreciated the assistance given by the donor countries, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations during the previous 16 years. With the return to normalcy, it was to be hoped that those organizations would continue to play an active role in the rehabilitation and reconstruction plans for all sectors of the country's economy, starting with basic services such as water, electricity, communications, sanitation and transport. Development of human resources and strengthening of institutional capabilities were priorities and, in that connection, he expressed the hope that Member States and organizations of the United Nations system would provide the training and technical assistance needed to start the process of reconstruction and development.

13. The Government and people of Lebanon had high expectations of the response of donor countries and organizations to the appeal to the international community which the Secretary-General would undoubtedly make on the basis of the report being drawn up by the Inter-Agency Needs Assessment Mission to Lebanon. It was also expected that the Arab countries and the industrialized countries would make a substantial contribution to the International Fund for Assistance to Lebanon to be established by the end of November, which would enable the Government to mobilize private capital in support of reconstruction, as confidence in the future of the country and its economy returned.

14. Mr. KHORRAMI (Afghanistan) said that, although it was difficult to eliminate all destruction caused by natural and man-made disasters, the steps being taken by the United Nations, its Member States, governmental and non-governmental organizations to achieve that end were positive and promising. However, in view of the vulnerability of many countries to such disasters and their long-term repercussions on the development process in the countries concerned, it was important to adopt further practical measures to promote international cooperation in the area.

15. Given the link that existed between underdevelopment and the frequency of such disasters as floods, drought and social upheaval, the main prerequisite for disaster mitigation in the developing countries continued to be the overall development of those countries; in the present-day world that aim could not be achieved without the aid of the developed countries and of the international community. In Afghanistan armed conflict had resulted in extensive loss of life, serious damage to the country's basic infrastructure, greatly reduced economic activity and increased poverty, and many provinces had been further affected by two major disasters, the earthquake of 2 February and the floods of 4 February 1991. Those two disasters had caused heavy loss of life and serious damage to property, at a time when the inhabitants of the areas concerned were already in urgent need of food, medicines, fuel and other basic items, as a result of man-made disasters. The humanitarian aid provided by donor countries had, in most cases, been too little and had come too late.

16. Adequate financial resources were needed to enable the specialized agencies and programmes to pursue their activities in Afghanistan. His Government recognized that provision of humanitarian assistance by the United Nations was a neutral act and had done all within its power to ensure that such assistance reached all those in need, regardless of whether they lived in Government-controlled areas or in areas under the control of opposition groups. Furthermore, by observing the basic principles for emergency assistance in conflict situations, his Government had succeeded in creating the conditions necessary to facilitate the distribution of humanitarian aid.

17. His delegation agreed that the General Assembly should consider coordination arrangements in the United Nations for emergency assistance but felt that the declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 could provide principled guidance for a thorough analysis of the subject.

18. Mrs. RAHOLINIRINA (Madagascar) said that her delegation fully endorsed the statement made by the representative of Ghana or behalf of the Group of 77. The General Assembly's proclamation of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was a clear indication of the international community's readiness to adopt a new approach to the question, based on prevention and response rather than fatalistic acceptance.

19. Although it was difficult, if not practically impossible, to prevent natural disasters, greater understanding of their nature, progress and scientific and technical discoveries meant that disasters could be anticipated

(Mrs. Raholinirina, Madagascar)

and their effects attenuated. The natural disasters which had occurred at the start of the current decade had resulted in economic losses of $47 billion and the loss of 3 million lives, a clear indication of the vital and urgent need for programmes to be implemented as part of the international measures taken in the framework of the Decade. In that connection, she welcomed the proposal to convene a conference on the prevention of natural disasters.

20. Because of its geographical location, her country was frequently subject to cyclones and floods; in addition, the southern part of the country was currently suffering from drought. Madagascar had taken measures geared to the prevention of natural disasters, including the training of local staff in disaster rescue and relief operations. The training activities were part of a broader project aimed at strengthening the country's ability to respond to natural disasters. It included the construction of four warehouses to store relief supplies in the regional centres of those areas most frequently affected by cyclones. Technical assistance for the implementation of the project had been received from UNDRO, while funding had been provided by UNDP. Her country wished to extend the project to other regions of the island and hoped to secure financial support from the international community for that purpose.

21. Being itself vulnerable to tropical cyclones, Madagascar attached particular importance to forecasting and early warning systems for natural disasters. The main obstacles to the upgrading of such systems in the developing countries were a lack of technical expertise in the fields of meteorology and hydrology and a shortage of funds. In order to overcome those obstacles it was necessary to establish cooperation based on the transfer of technology and the provision of equipment and facilities. In that connection, her country welcomed the assistance of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and supported the special projects formulated by WMO in the context of the Decade. Similarly, the close collaboration between the scientific and technical committee on the Decade and Governments, particularly those of developing countries, was useful in ensuring that the research and activities undertaken by the committee took account of the domestic priorities and real needs of those countries. Cooperation in cases of natural disasters and emergency situations of all kinds was of undoubted importance for the developing countries, which were greatly affected by the economic damage caused by such events.

22. Madagascar was grateful for the assistance given by the international community in critical situations but was of the view that it was necessary to enhance the developing countries' capability to handle their own problems in order to reduce their vulnerability and dependence on international assistance. Accordingly, in the evaluation of the results of the Decade, account should be taken of response capability which was one of the criteria of development. An international strategy could be of assistance in disaster prevention always provided that it was correctly oriented. In turn, disaster prevention combined with forward planning would assist sustained development

(Mrs. Raholinirina, Madagascar)

since it would help to create a more stable and less vulnerable environment which was a necessary condition for investment and the encouragement of free enterprise.

23. As had been shown, poverty resulting from underdevelopment was one of the basic causes of the deterioration of the environment which had contributed to a number of natural disasters. It was therefore to be hoped that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would strengthen the measures adopted in the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

24. As UNDRO was the only United Nations agency specializing in disaster relief, there was increasing justification for its existence and functions. Accordingly, it was essential that UNDRO should be provided with the resources and means needed to cope with rising needs and to fulfil its mandate effectively. As the Secretary-General had pointed out in his report on the item (A/46/568), the first essential condition for coping with natural disasters was that the resources provided must be sufficient and readily available and the second was proper coordination. Madagascar fully shared that view and, in addition, considered that urgent humanitarian assistance must respect national sovereignty and must respond to a request from the country and be implemented in coordination with the country. The achievement of the goals of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction would require strong political will on the part of the international community since it was not a question of taking occasional measures of assistance but of pursuing long-term activities designed to reduce the vulnerability of those countries.

25. Mr. JOMAA (Tunisia) said that his delegation shared the view of the Secretary-General that the activities for natural disaster prevention could achieve more positive results if two conditions were met, namely: first, resources must be sufficient and readily available and second, coordination within the United Nations system and with Member States as well as with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations must be improved. The first priority thus concerned resources and coordination came next. That order was justified not only by the experience of many developing countries but also by the experience of the United Nations.

26. The Secretary-General had pointed out that natural disaster mitigation activities in developing countries had been limited by lack of funds even when scientific and technical knowledge existed. Furthermore, the Secretary-General had pointed out that UNDRO lacked the resources to upgrade its information system for the same reason.

27. All that went to confirm his delegation's conviction that resources were the main factor in strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to cope with natural disasters and other emergencies. It therefore welcomed the idea of establishing a special fund for disasters under the control of the

(Mr. Jomaa, Tunisia)

Secretary-General. His delegation recognized that the root causes of emergencies must be tackled properly and considered that, as part of the proposed fund, a service should be established which would assist the developing countries to promote their own disaster preparedness and prevention activities in conformity with one of the major goals of the Decade.

28. Coordination was also an essential element to ensure an effective response to emergencies. Consistent with its mandate, UNDRO was the coordinating office of the United Nations system for disaster relief and disaster mitigation activities. He recalled that, in General Assembly resolution 45/221, the Secretary-General had been requested to submit proposals for the strengthening of the capacity of UNDRO to fulfil its mandate and it was a matter for regret that the report requested had not been received.

29. Mr. BULL (Liberia) expressed the heartfelt thanks of the people and government of his country to all those donors who had provided emergency assistance for the economic and social rehabilitation of Liberia and welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the matter (A/46/403). He recalled that sustained efforts were being made to achieve a political settlement of the Liberian crisis and announced that, a few hours earlier, on 29 October, the fourth meeting of the Committee of Five established by the mediation committee of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had commenced in Yamassoukrou, Côte d'Ivoire. At that meeting two important agreements, among others, had been reached: free and democratic elections would be held within six months and the National Patriot Front would disarm and encamp its fighters within 60 days and relinquish the territory currently under its control to the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

30. The Interim Government of National Unity which had been set up in August 1990 for the purpose of strengthening democratic institutions with a view to establishing lasting peace and stability was therefore achieving its principal goals. At the same time, it was making efforts to create the necessary conditions for the repatriation and resettlement of Liberian refugees, returnees and displaced persons. For that purpose it had established a National Planning and Coordinating Committee which had formulated a two-year action plan estimated to cost $67.6 million. Liberia was prepared to contribute the entire infrastructure and $2.5 million. That plan would be supplemented by another basic plan which was designed to transform the lives of fighters and armed personnel within the period of one year by incorporating them in the productive activities of the country as responsible citizens. That would cost another $38.5 million; Liberia was confident that the international community, aware of the importance of both projects, would once again show its generosity and make it possible for the plan to be fully implemented.

31. In addition, the Interim Government of Liberia, with the assistance of the United Nations agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations, had been able to restore basic services in the capital, Monrovia, and had

(Mr. Bull, Liberia)

achieved modest results in the fields of education, health, transportation and communications. Once those goals had been achieved, a legitimate government would be installed through free elections under the control and supervision of the United Nations. For that purpose an Electoral Commission had been created; a five-member Supreme Court of Justice had been set up and a Code of Ethics governing the activities of all public officials had been formulated; freedom of the press was being encouraged and all the necessary measures were being adopted so that during the electoral process all registered political parties would have equal access to State-owned media institutions in conformity with the law and adherence to due process and the rule of law was being stressed.

32. He was pleased to see that the Second Committee was currently considering other questions concerning emergency assistance as a supplement to development assistance in general since whether development was sustainable and cost effective would depend on the manner in which problems arising out of emergency situations were overcome. Unfortunately some of those situations had been relegated to oblivion while others had been given special attention. All emergencies must be addressed in a coordinated and even-handed manner.

33. Liberia, one of the founding members of the United Nations, was approaching a crucial phase during which it would be taking action on repatriation, resettlement of all Liberian refugees and laying the foundations for free and democratic elections. Prospects were thus opening for a better future for the country and it was to be hoped that those prospects would become reality with the effective cooperation of all.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
28th meeting
held on
Friday, 1 November 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 28th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZIARAN (Vice-Chairman) (Iran)

later: Mr. BURKE (Chairman) (Ireland)

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A/C.2/46/SR.28
8 November 1991

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Ziaran (Iran), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/C.2/46/L.27)

Draft resolution on least developed status and special assistance for Namibia (A/C.2/46/L.27)

1. Mr. NAADJIE (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, introduced the draft resolution drawing particular attention to the first and second preambular paragraphs. He expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 77: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued) (A/C.2/46/L.26)

Draft resolution on the report of the South Commission (A/C.2/46/L.26)

2. Mr. NAADJIE (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, introduced the draft resolution which reflected the receptiveness of the international community to the bold and imaginative proposals contained in the report of the South Commission. He urged the Committee to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

(i) ENTREPRENEURSHIP (continued) (A/C.2/46/L.25)

Draft resolution on entrepreneurship (A/C.2/46/L.25)

3. Mr. DUGAN (United States of America), introducing the draft resolution, announced that Ukraine had joined the list of sponsors. The draft resolution addressed three broad areas: measures to enhance the coordination of the activities of the United Nations system in promoting entrepreneurship, measures to strengthen communication and coordination among the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, and measures to strengthen the private-sector focus of the United Nations system. His delegation hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

4. Mr. AVALLE (Argentina) said that his delegation had joined the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.25.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/46/3)

AGENDA ITEM 83: INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION (continued) (A/46/3, A/46/266 and Add.1-E/1991/106 and Add.1, A/46/336, 344 and 520)

AGENDA ITEM 84: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/46/3, 288 and 306)

(a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR (A/46/568)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (A/46/217-E/1991/94, A/46/316, 369, 452, 457, 458 and 557)

AGENDA ITEM 85: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (continued) (A/46/396)

AGENDA ITEM 91: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REHABILITATION OF LIBERIA (continued) (A/46/403)

5. Mr. BURTON (United States of America) said that his delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the review of the capacity, experience and coordination arrangements in the United Nations system for humanitarian assistance (A/46/568) and agreed that the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) should be strengthened so that it could better fulfil its mandate. For example, UNDRO had an important role to play in improving early warning systems and in disaster reduction and disaster mitigation efforts. The Office should be commended for its work with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on a joint disaster manual and the implementation of a joint training programme in disaster management.

6. His delegation had been among the co-sponsors of General Assembly resolution 44/236 which, inter alia, had proclaimed the International Decade for Natural Diaster Reduction and had adopted the International Framework of Action for the Decade, and it hoped that the Decade would yield tangible results. His delegation urged the Secretary-General to ensure full and careful coordination among the various United Nations agencies, particularly with UNDRO, to avoid duplication of effort.

7. During the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly his delegation had been able to support most resolutions that called for voluntary assistance to particular countries to help them deal with special circumstances which had a serious negative impact on their development efforts. Positive developments in Angola during the past year augured well for the adoption by consensus at the current session of a resolution which would contribute to the restoration of peace and a democratic government there. His country had provided $US 130 million in humanitarian assistance to Liberia since the beginning of the conflict there and it hoped that the Committee would prepare a draft resolution to facilitate assistance to displaced persons and refugees in Liberia and contribute to the establishment of a democratically elected government and respect for human rights.

8. Humanitarian assistance must, of course, be provided as expeditiously as possible wherever it was needed. However, it also was essential to martial the resources and the scientific knowledge and capabilities at the disposal of

(Mr. Burton, United States)

the international community in order to enable countries in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere to become self-sufficient in respect of food.

9. His Government welcomed the significant changes taking place in Ethiopia and hoped they would have a positive impact on stability throughout the Horn of Africa. The opportunity existed for hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes and resume productive lives in security. His Government, which had contributed over $US 300 million in 1991 in humanitarian assistance, was prepared to support repatriation, reintegration and development programmes and called on other donors to do likewise in support of peace and stability in the region.

10. Mr. AVANESOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation commended the activities undertaken in 1991 in connection with the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction; in particular, the first sessions of the Special High-level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee had been rather productive. The High-level Council's New York Declaration was of special relevance to the Decade. Further measures should be taken to ensure that the activities of the Decade were of real use to the national services. The United Nations should make specific practical recommendations to government and non-governmental organizations regarding the most efficient way of setting up mechanisms to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters. Particular emphasis should be placed on the development of preventive mechanisms, including early warning systems.

11. The activities of national mechanisms for dealing with natural disasters could be improved through the dissemination of international experience in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters. Such actions should be linked with similar actions in dealing with man-made and environmental disasters.

12. In order to implement the programme of the Decade, the Soviet Union had established the USSR National Committee for the Decade as well as a Centre for Liaison with International Organizations. Soviet representatives took part in the work of the Special High-level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Decade. The USSR National Committee had concluded a number of bilateral agreements on mutual assistance in cases of natural disasters, in particular with Italy and Germany.

13. His delegation commended the work of UNDRO in mobilizing emergency assistance to countries affected by natural or industrial disasters, and it was prepared to broaden its cooperation with that organization. UNDRO should play a more active role in implementing the goals of the International Decade and should help strengthen the capacity of the United Nations in the area of disaster prevention and mitigation and to improve coordination among the organs and organizations of the United Nations system in that area.

14. Ms. KOFLER (Austria) said that, while the international community's awareness of the potential for mitigating national disasters had increased, additional efforts should be made to reduce the vulnerability of countries to natural disasters, establish effective early warning systems and improve disaster management on the basis of existing prevention and preparedness strategies. The progressive development of national committees and focal points was a valuable basis for the effective implementation of Decade activities.

15. Her delegation had noted with great interest the recommendations of the Special High-level Council contained in its New York Declaration of 10 October 1991. In particular, the proposal to incorporate natural disaster activities within plans to achieve sustainable development and to bring that policy to the attention of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, merited further consideration. Her delegation also supported the Council's suggestion that the General Assembly endorse bringing together representatives of national committees in a world conference on natural disaster reduction in 1994 as part of the mid-term review of the Decade.

16. Her delegation appreciated the valuable and highly professional work carried out by UNDRO, in particular its efforts to alleviate the effects of the cyclone in Bangladesh earlier in the year. Austria had made an overall contribution of $1.5 million to UNDRO and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that had responded to that emergency situation. Her delegation was pleased with the strengthened relationship between UNDRO and UNDP, in particular with the positive impact of the UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Training Programme.

17. The international community should endeavour to improve all aspects of natural disaster reduction, bearing in mind that the mitigation of the impact of natural disasters was directly related to sound economic, social and environmental development.

18. Austria participated actively in the meetings of officials in charge of national emergency relief services. Those meetings had repeatedly underscored the importance of upgrading technical tools, such as communication and information management systems, as one way of improving the efficiency of search-and-rescue initiatives. Earlier in the year, the Austrian Government had hosted an international workshop dealing with search-and-rescue activities, which had been organized by UNDRO. In the context of disaster-related information management, her delegation welcomed the efforts being made to strengthen and expand the existing United Nations International Emergency Network (UNIENET) with a view to establishing an interactive electronic network for emergency-management and disaster-reduction purposes.

19. Ms. STOKES (New Zealand) said that the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was well under way and substantial progress had already been achieved. About one hundred national committees or focal points had been established, and their activities were increasing. The New York Declaration

(Ms. Stokes, New Zealand)

adopted at the inaugural session of the Special High-level Council would help promote the goals of the Decade. Her delegation endorsed the Council's call for countries to recognize the importance of incorporating natural disaster activities within plans to achieve sustainable development.

20. New Zealand had established a national committee, and was involved in a number of measures to minimize loss of life and damage caused by disasters. Such measures included the maintenance and improvement of meteorological services and the upgrading of radio transmission throughout the South Pacific region. It had also undertaken official development assistance (ODA) projects in which its expertise in earthquake-engineering technology had been used to improve local building practices. Another project had involved the building of houses designed to withstand cyclone-force winds. Through its ODA programme, it was contributing to long-term rehabilitation in the wake of natural disasters; in that regard, its activities had not been confined to the South Pacific. In recent years, there had been a growing emphasis on improving regional disaster-relief coordination in the South Pacific, including cooperation with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

21. In the long-term, global warming could become the most significant natural disaster confronting the countries of the South Pacific. Global warming would have a cumulative effect within the next 50 years. The most serious problem was likely to be the associated rise in sealevel, which would affect low-lying coral atolls and the low coastal plains of high volcanic islands. Moreover, it was widely believed that global warming led to an increase in the number and intensity of tropical cyclones. Associated changes in the marine environment as a result of global warming were also likely to create economic and social difficulties, particularly for the island developing countries of the region. New Zealand was currently engaged in scientific and technical work relating to global warming.

22. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia), recalling the terrible devastation wrought by natural phenomena during the past 20 years, said that his delegation strongly supported the United Nations International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Disaster mitigation efforts ideally should involve the use of appropriate and sustainable technology which maximized scarce economic, technical and infrastructure resources. A major task of the Decade was to promote public awareness in disaster-prone countries of the potential for disaster reduction and to place greater emphasis on pre-disaster prevention and preparedness.

23. His delegation particularly welcomed the report contained in document A/46/266 and Add.1 and the recommendations in the New York Declaration of the Special High-level Council. His delegation strongly agreed with the Council that all countries should form national committees for the Decade and should recognize the importance of incorporating natural disaster activities within plans to achieve sustainable development and to undertake actions to reduce

(Mr. Babington, Australia)

vulnerabilities through the application of disaster-mitigation strategies. Special attention must also be paid to protecting children from natural disasters and their consequences.

24. His country was contributing to the Decade by undertaking activities, through its Decade coordination committee, focusing mainly on the south-west Pacific region. Its major contribution would be the Pacific Disaster Preparedness Programme, the purpose of which was to assist participating countries with the development of national programmes, including hazard and vulnerability analyses, counter-disaster planning and damage assessment. A key feature was the preparation of a series of emergency operations and training manuals currently in use in some 35 countries.

25. In order to enhance the ability of the United Nations to respond to humanitarian emergencies, it was necessary to strengthen and reform UNDRO. While it was true that several factors had limited the Office's past performance, its strengths should not be overlooked. Those included improved information-gathering, the preparation of timely situation reports on individual disasters, and enhanced disaster mitigation and management training, the latter in conjunction with UNDP. The new UNDRO office in Fiji had a great potential to improve the coordination of donor-funded disaster preparedness activities in the south-west Pacific region, and his country looked forward to working with that office.

26. It was necessary to define the mandate of UNDRO more clearly and encourage improvements in performance. While UNDRO had originally been envisaged as the focal point in the United Nations for disaster relief activities in general, it had increasingly come to be regarded solely as a natural disaster mitigation and relief organization. The Office should play a major role in both natural and man-made emergencies. Its role as a clearing-house for information about emergencies and relief activities and its work in disaster prevention and forecasting and stimulating preparedness should be expanded. UNDRO should play the leading role in, and provide secretariat servicing for, a standing inter-agency committee which would meet regularly in Geneva and would also meet automatically in response to any major humanitarian emergency. His delegation also envisaged a role for UNDRO as the central point for the collection of information on the standby capacities of countries, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. The current session of the General Assembly should establish the framework for a strengthened UNDRO and for improved coordination of the response of the United Nations system to humanitarian emergencies.

27. Mr. KOIKE (Japan) said that various natural disasters during the past year had again demonstrated the critical importance of disaster prevention and preparedness in achieving damage reduction. International cooperation in that area should be strengthened, taking advantage of available scientific and technical means.

(Mr. Koike, Japan)

28. His Government had consistently taken the initiative in promoting the goals and objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and was pleased to note from the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/266 and Add.1) that nearly 100 national committees or focal points had been established to promote the goals of the Decade and that many had begun to promote disaster mitigation activities. It was also gratifying to note that regional interest in the issue was growing, as illustrated by the various meetings convened on issues relating to natural disasters. He drew particular attention to a meeting convened at Tokyo on 9 October to discuss ways to promote international cooperation to prevent and reduce earthquake damage. His Government would continue to be active in that area.

29. The report of the Secretary-General on the Decade demonstrated that the United Nations had made substantial progress in its Decade-related activities. The New York Declaration was a particularly useful document. His delegation hoped that the members of the Council would work energetically to fulfil the important mandate entrusted to it. The programme for the Decade prepared by the Scientific and Technical Committee was a major contribution in the area of disaster prevention and preparedness, and every nation should take it into account in formulating its own programme. The programme also should be given serious consideration by all international organizations concerned with disasters and development, and the General Assembly should endorse the Committee's work. The proposed world conference on natural disaster reduction would provide a major opportunity to assess the progress made in formulating and implementing relevant policies, and his delegation would support the proposal.

30. His delegation commended the secretariat of the Decade for the work it had accomplished with the limited financial and human resources at its disposal and believed that it deserved increased support from the international community. Early in 1991 his Government had contributed $US 500,000 earmarked for Decade activities and it had recently contributed an equal amount to the trust fund for the Decade. His delegation appealed to other countries to extend strong support to the secretariat of the Decade.

31. In pursuing the goals and objectives of the Decade, the United Nations should place higher priority on disaster mitigation in the assistance it provided to developing countries and should increase its efforts to sensitize the world community to the importance of the problem. Every organ of the United Nations system should work towards that end, and the General Assembly should adopt a resolution calling for strong support for the various initiatives of the Decade.

32. His Government highly appreciated the activities of UNDRO and had consistently provided it with financial support. His Government had particularly high regard for the UNDRO information report, to which it often referred in formulating and implementing disaster assistance programmes in response to specific disasters, and would like to maintain close cooperation

(Mr. Koike, Japan)

with UNDRO on activities in that area. His Government hoped that useful meetings such as the recent meeting of officials in charge of national emergency relief services would be conducted more frequently.

33. Mr. Burke (Ireland) took the Chair.

34. Mr. CHINYAMA (Zambia) said that his statement would focus on the reports of the Secretary-General on special assistance to front-line States and other bordering States (A/46/369) and international assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola (A/46/396). The peace agreement in Angola was firmly in place and a transitional arrangement to bring sustained harmony and economic growth and development to that country augured well for the future. The negotiations were continuing in Mozambique, while in South Africa, violence was still prevalent and the Pretoria regime had not yet entered into good-faith negotiations to draft a democratic constitution with truly representative parties of the black majority. Nevertheless, the future belonged to peace.

35. Years of aggression and destabilization had severely undermined the development of southern Africa, creating a need for substantial reconstruction, rehabilitation and structural adjustment efforts; those would have to be undertaken against a background of historic international political and economic developments. Political changes aimed at reinforcing democracy created a risk of social instability, and it must be borne in mind that while democracy was a prerequisite for economic development, economic development itself was essential if the gains of democracy were to be consolidated.

36. There was no doubt that the studies being undertaken by some countries which provided special assistance to front-line States and other bordering States on their future relations with the region in a post-apartheid era would have a major impact on southern Africa's relations with the international community. He underscored the importance to the countries of the region of reconstruction, rehabilitation, market access and debt relief and urged the international community to bear in mind that apartheid remained firmly in place and that major obstacles had yet to be overcome. The international community should maintain pressure on the Pretoria regime in order to encourage it towards the path of reconciliation, peace and democracy.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
29th meeting
held on
Friday, 1 November 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

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AGENDA ITEM 91: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REHABILITATION OF LIBERIA (continued) (A/46/403)

1. Mr. GONFING (Chad) said that the current international economic situation was marked by an acute economic crisis of the third world countries in general and the African countries in particular. That difficult economic situation was being worsened by the steady deterioration in the terms of trade and by the burden of external debt, which threatened to frustrate for a long time the legitimate aspiration of the African peoples to development. Only an active solidarity which channelled the "peace dividend" into the economic restructuring of the poor countries would make it possible to overcome misery and poverty. In a period like the present, which was characterized by the détente between the two super-Powers and in which the winds of democracy are blowing in both the East and the South, the United Nations was more than ever called on to play a basic part in the maintenance of international peace and security and in promoting the social and economic development of the developing countries.

2. His country was grateful for the constant attention the United Nations had given it for more than a decade, during which it had suffered war and natural disasters. There had been three noteworthy stages in the cooperation between Chad and the United Nations: the adoption of a special programme of reconstruction in 1982, the adoption of an interim plan in 1985 and the adoption in 1990 of an orientation plan which included the holding of sectoral round tables proposed by the Government of Chad. Several of those round tables, the purpose of which was to determine the strategies of the various sectors of the integrated economic development policy, had already been held.

(Mr. Gonfing, Chad)

3. Chad was once again confronting an emergency situation, as the Secretary-General had indicated clearly in his report (A/46/316). To overcome that situation, the Government of the Republic of Chad intended to convene a conference of donors to Chad in Paris shortly, in which it would submit an emergency plan intended in particular to deal with the reorganization of the army and the reintegration of the voluntary returnees. Those returnees had never been registered as refugees, which prevented the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from assisting them when they returned to the country from neighbouring countries.

4. Chad, a land-locked country suffering from drought and desertification and with limited financial resources, had only one export product; it was a poor country with a rudimentary economic infrastructure. However, studies had indicated the existence of minerals which could help it rise out of poverty. In the meantime, while the search for those resources continued, Chad hoped that it would be given special treatment because of its special situation, which had been made worse in recent months by floods and the cholera epidemic.

5. Mr. BIAOU (Benin) expressed full agreement with the statement made by the representative of Ghana on behalf of the States members of the Group of 77. Natural disasters were one of the main concerns of the contemporary world, in view of their frequency and their tragic consequences. The proclamation of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was not an end in itself and the Member States of the United Nations should make an effort both individually and collectively to achieve the goals of the Decade.

6. The steps taken so far at the national and international levels encouraged the hope that new methods for the prevention of natural disasters would gradually be adopted. Since 1 January 1990 about 100 committees and national coordination centres for the Decade had in fact been established and many international, regional and national meetings had been held to study the many aspects of disaster mitigation. His delegation supported the six actions proposed by the Scientific and Technical Committee on the Decade for reducing substantially the number of victims of natural disasters by the year 2000 and establishing a much more solid basis for social and economic development.

7. His delegation also agreed that a world conference on natural disaster reduction should be held in 1994. Since the proclamation of the Decade many natural or man-made disasters had taken place in every continent, among them the catastrophic floods Benin had experienced in July 1990. Over a 10-year period, Benin had experienced four floods which had had tragic consequences and had worsened the situation of the country, which was among those least developed.

8. His delegation appealed for larger voluntary contributions to UNDRO's budget and proposed that the possibility of establishing mandatory contributions should be considered, in view of the fact that no State was exempt from natural or man-made disasters. In addition to providing UNDRO

(Mr. Biaou, Benin)

with the necessary financial resources, it was essential to include among the priorities of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction the execution of reconstruction and rehabilitation projects and the adoption of preventive measures to mitigate the effects of future disasters. Those measures should be included in agenda item 21 of the United Nations Conference for the Environment and Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro in the coming year. The possible natural disasters envisaged in the context of the Decade were indeed closely related to factors such as climatic change, deforestation, erosion, desertification, drought, air and water pollution and biological diversity. Natural or man-made disasters were in fact the phenomena most destructive of the environment and causing severe economic problems.

9. The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction offered all nations an unprecedented opportunity to show that they could conquer nature by solidarity and concerted action.

10. Mr. PEREIRA (Cape Verde), speaking also on behalf of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe, referring to the question of international assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola, said that for many years the people of Angola had suffered economic hardship because of the political instability that had existed in the country since independence. In addition, the situation had been aggravated by natural disasters and, although Angola possessed vast natural resources, in the past few years political instability had prevented it from using them. Fortunately, with the signing of the peace accord, the internal conditions had been created for all Angolans to benefit from the country's rich resources. Nevertheless, the Angolan people were in dire need of immediate economic assistance and both the international community in general and individual States had a duty to come to their aid.

11. At the previous session, the General Assembly had adopted a resolution on economic assistance to Angola in which it had appealed for help in the economic rehabilitation of the country. In response to that appeal, the international community had provided Angola with financial, material and technical assistance. As noted in the Secretary-General's report, assistance had been provided in various fields, from macroeconomic management to a financial reform programme and assistance to displaced persons. Although all those activities were very helpful, Angola's economic problems continued to be the main obstacle to the consolidation of social stability in the country. Accordingly, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe and Cape Verde appealed to all countries and to the international community at large to provide Angola with the economic assistance which it needed so badly.

12. Mr. ELNUR (Sudan), speaking on agenda item 84 (b), special programmes of economic assistance, said that the combined effects of a depressed economy, successive natural disasters and armed conflict in Sudan had resulted in the displacement of large numbers of the population, creating socio-economic problems that it was beyond the Government's powers to solve.

(Mr. Elnur, Sudan)

13. In 1988, the Sudan had appealed to the international community, through the Secretary-General, for help in alleviating the plight of the thousands of people whose lives were threatened. The General Assembly had adopted a number of resolutions on assistance to the Sudan, the most recent being resolution 45/226 of 21 December 1990. That had marked the beginning of Operation Lifeline Sudan, which had made it possible to save many lives and had established the precedent of an agreement between two warring parties to allow the passage of relief goods to affected civilians on both sides. The second phase of the Operation had continued to develop in 1990 and 1991, in conditions that had been aggravated by persistent drought, the ongoing war in the southern part of the country and the negative impact of the Gulf crisis.

14. In the face of those unfavourable circumstances, the Government had redoubled its efforts and implemented a number of adjustment programmes. In 1990, the irrigated area had been expanded to allow for increased food production, while cotton was grown in rain-fed areas. The Government had also requested cooperation from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in conducting an assessment of the food shortfall, which had been estimated at 1.2 million tons. The international donor community had responded to the Government's appeal for supplies to cover the shortfall, and the World Food Programme (WFP) had assumed responsibility for coordinating assistance while the national authorities had provided every facility possible for the relief activities, including a highly favourable exchange rate. In fact, the Sudan was doing everything in its power to remedy the situation. However, it had to face enormous difficulties, including the vastness of the country, an inadequate communications network, shortages of fuel and spare parts and bureaucratic procedures.

15. In those difficult circumstances, the visits of Mr. Ingram, Executive Director of WFP, and Mr. Jonah, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, had made it possible to reach agreement on the dropping of relief supplies by air to the refugees returning from Ethiopia and to launch the third phase of Operation Lifeline Sudan. For purely humanitarian reasons, the Government of the Sudan was seeking to facilitate the task of WFP, the non-governmental organizations and the donor countries, despite the fact that the other party to the conflict failed to show the same good will and that most of the returnees were carrying arms with which to fight the Government.

16. As far as western Sudan was concerned, the food situation was satisfactory, although the lack of an effective transport network made it difficult to move supplies. Hence the importance of the project for the rehabilitation of the railway sector, under the auspices of the World Bank, which could have been put into effect had some donor countries not withdrawn their support for it. It was to be hoped that the situation would develop favourably and that, with the assistance of the United Nations system, donor countries and non-governmental organizations, the Sudan would be able to overcome its current difficulties.

17. Mr. CORREIA (Angola) said that his country was grateful to the international community for its efforts to implement General Assembly resolution 45/233 of 21 December 1990. There was no doubt that, with the restoration of peace in Angola, donor countries would gradually recover from any fear and lack of trust they might still feel. It was strange, and indeed sad, that a country with so many natural resources should need emergency assistance from the international community to satisfy its population's most basic needs. The situation was due, above all, to a 16-year war fomented and imposed upon the people from outside the country.

18. Angola needed aid to reconstruct its ruined infrastructure, reactivate its economy and cope with the problems of assisting hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons, not forgetting the demobilization of hundreds of soldiers, in accordance with the Estoril Peace Pact. The assistance of the United Nations system and the entire international community would be vital in that respect.

19. Angola, which had not always chosen the best economic path, had, in the past four years, embarked on a broad programme of economic and financial restructuring with a view to establishing a more effective, productive and competitive economic system. It had been a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank since 1989. IMF had provided valuable technical assistance and the Bank had granted loans amounting to $23 million. There was no doubt that, with help from all sides, the Angolan economy would recover and closer trade ties would be established with the countries of the region. In that way, not only would a community of some 150 million persons be restored to calm and prosperity, but the whole southern region of the continent would benefit from greater peace and stability.

20. Mr. AL-ERYANI (Yemen) said that, increasingly, the international community was attributing greater importance to economic assistance to the developing countries, whose general situation had deteriorated in the past few years as a result of natural disasters, among other things. In the current climate of détente in international relations, it would be easier to make progress in the field of negotiation and cooperation with a view to providing special assistance to the countries most exposed to such disasters. It was not enough to show solidarity with them; it was necessary to adopt more extensive preventive measures and to help them financially, in cases of emergency, particularly from the point of view of food supplies and health care, so that they could, first, alleviate the sufferings of their peoples, and, then, elaborate wide-ranging social and economic policies aimed at raising the standard of living of the population in accordance with a carefully established order of priorities.

21. The activities undertaken by United Nations bodies to meet emergency situations were very positive, in particular the effective work of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO). In that regard, there were two basic and mutually reinforcing objectives: to establish regular coordination between the donor countries and the specialized agencies, on the one hand, and the developing countries, above all the least developed

(Mr. Al-Eryani, Yemen)

among them, on the other, and at the same time to strengthen the infrastructure of the main sectors of activity in the countries concerned with a view to implementing the necessary plans to correct the shortcomings in their economies. It was also very important to intensify information and dissemination efforts to ensure that world public opinion was kept fully abreast of events and was able to take speedy action whenever necessary.

22. After commending the assistance of all kinds that had been given to the world's needy, in particular to the Palestinian people living in the territories occupied by Israel, his delegation noted that Yemen had had to face many problems of underdevelopment, the legacy of the colonial era and the reactionary regime of the Imams, which had divided the country and left deep scars in the Yemeni people. But thanks to the enormous efforts made to overcome that legacy, the unity of the Republic had been achieved without resort to other than peaceful and democratic means. Following that preliminary step, maximum efforts were being made to build a new country with a modern society, in keeping with existing possibilities.

23. In order to achieve those goals, the cooperation of the entire United Nations system and the assistance of the international community was more necessary than ever, because both the reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes and the economic and social development and planning programmes, clearly described in the Secretary-General's report (A/46/217), required resources for their execution that were attainable only through a considerable increase in bilateral and multilateral assistance. It was to be hoped that in 1992, such an increase would help to alleviate the sufferings of the peoples of all the developing countries. His delegation was convinced that improving the potential capacity of the developing countries to raise the standard of living of their inhabitants would eventually benefit the world economy as a whole.

24. Mr. SIDDIQUI (Bangladesh) said that no issue on the agenda was of greater interest to his country than the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, proclaimed by the General Assembly in resolution 44/236, which had begun on 1 January 1990. The first two years of the Decade had seen a series of tropical cyclones, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, droughts and other natural disasters. On 30 April 1991, southern Bangladesh had been struck by the worst cyclone in living memory. Some 140,000 persons had died, and millions had been left homeless and without drinking water, food, clothing or medicine. The cyclone had had consequences for the entire economic infrastructure, and the budgetary impact of relief operations and proposed rehabilitation programmes was projected at 1.3 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

25. The recently elected democratic Government had been working without respite to mitigate the desolation and suffering, but it was more aware than ever of the importance of disaster preparedness and prevention measures and of the establishment of an early-warning system. Of particular importance were the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Decade,

(Mr. Siddiqui, Bangladesh)

which were explained in full in the Secretary-General's report (A/46/266). It was also important to coordinate the efforts of the Governments concerned, the United Nations system, the scientific and technical community and other relevant organizations and to elaborate and implement specific projects that would translate recommendations into activities so as to advance the goals and objectives of the Decade. In that context, it was essential to give top priority to financing the activities of the Decade so that the momentum generated would not be lost.

26. Lastly, Bangladesh promised its fullest cooperation in all initiatives taken by UNDRO and the secretariat of the Decade, which, despite limited manpower and resources, had been carrying out effective work.

27. Mr. VASILE (Romania) said that recent years had seen an increasing number of natural and man-made disasters and emergency situations throughout the world, causing great loss of life, enormous human suffering and heavy material damage. Those disasters had occurred mostly in the developing countries and their impact had been intensified by the serious economic difficulties already facing those countries. The need for prompt assistance to mitigate the adverse effects of those events had highlighted the urgency of strengthening the United Nations capacity in the area of special economic and disaster-relief assistance. Protecting the environment, avoiding its further deterioration and preventing technological and other man-made disasters were other challenges in that area.

28. Romania was pleased to note that during its more than 20 years of existence, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator had been increasingly effective in coping with disaster and emergency situations. The valuable role of UNDRO must be retained and, indeed, enhanced, given its growing involvement in disaster prevention, in ensuring preparedness and in providing technical advice and assistance for relief activities. Future efforts to strengthen UNDRO must take into account the deficiencies of the United Nations system in the area of humanitarian and special relief assistance, together with the need for a closer linkage between emergency assistance and rehabilitation and development efforts in the affected countries.

29. Romania was convinced that the efficiency of UNDRO activities could be greatly enhanced by strengthening its cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other United Nations organs, organizations and specialized agencies. It commended the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator for his latest initiatives concerning the implementation, in cooperation with UNDP, of a disaster management training programme, the publication of a disaster management manual, the establishment of an inter-agency roster of disaster specialists, the participation in disaster telecommunication programmes and efforts to upgrade the UNDRO information management systems.

(Mr. Vasile, Romania)

30. He referred to the relatively recent national disaster that had taken place in the eastern part of Romania, in Moldavia. In the summer of 1991, flooding in that area had resulted in great loss of life and serious destruction. The total assessed damage had amounted to 3 billion lei. His delegation took the opportunity to express its profound gratitude to the international community, UNDRO and international and non-governmental organizations for the relief assistance they had provided to Romania to help it to cope with the painful aftermath of that disaster.

31. Ms. HASSAN (Somalia) said that her delegation had read with great interest the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/457) on emergency assistance to Somalia. Somalia wished first of all to express its sincere appreciation to the Member States, in particular to Germany, Greece, Italy, Liechtenstein, Norway, Sweden and Turkey, and to a number of institutions in the United Nations system, namely the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development for their generous and timely assistance. That humanitarian gesture had come at a time when the situation in the country had been dramatic, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report. Somalia welcomed the assurances given by the World Bank that it stood ready to extend assistance for reconstruction when the security situation permitted.

32. The security assessment mission that had visited Somalia from 7 to 11 May 1991 on the initiative of the Secretary-General had made an evaluation of the situation in that country. The Secretary-General's report on emergency assistance to Somalia (A/46/457) provided full details on that mission. It should be stressed, as indicated in the report, that the human tragedy in Somalia affected the population of all regions of the country. There had been total destruction of the country's human and physical infrastructure in both urban and rural areas. Thousands of lives had been lost. Hundreds of thousands of people had fled to neighbouring countries as refugees or had been displaced to unfamiliar locations within the country, while those who remained in their normal habitat had to face a host of hardships generated by that state of disruption.

33. Her delegation was encouraged that a resumed United Nations presence in the form of a limited group of staff had been established in the north and the centre of the country. The Secretary-General's report claimed that a situation of instability persisted which posed many obstacles to relief and rehabilitation operations. However, her delegation wished to point out that there were areas, especially in the north-east and central parts of the country and in some parts of the south, which were safe and where the assistance could be resumed without much hindrance. It was to be hoped that, with the overall improvement in the security situation in Somalia, it would be possible for entities of the United Nations system to resume their normal activities in all regions of Somalia. That would contribute to the immediate alleviation of the untold sufferings endured by the millions of unfortunate

(Ms. Hassan, Somalia)

victims of circumstances in the country. However, for a fair and equitable distribution of relief supplies, it would be of vital importance to use a larger number of locations, since there were immense difficulties in transporting those supplies from one region to another, or even within the same region.

34. Mr. MAYORGA CORTES (Nicaragua), speaking also on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, said that the Central American countries welcomed the admission of Panama as a full member of the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America, under the decision adopted at the summit held by the Presidents of the Central American republics in July 1991 in San Salvador. Central America expressed its gratitude for the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 45/231, in which it had decided to extend the Plan for an additional three-year period beginning in 1991. The Central American countries also wished to express appreciation to the Governing Council of UNDP for its decision to earmark for activities carried out under the Plan a sum of $20 million from special programme resources.

35. The Central American countries considered that the rate of execution of the Special Plan was satisfactory, as well as the specific content of its programmes and projects. Under the Special Plan, portfolios of investment and technical cooperation projects had been formulated for an amount of some $2,300 million, which had been used to secure resources in the form of disbursements or firm pledges for an amount of $312 million. The $16.2 million provided by UNDP had made it possible to finance 58 technical cooperation projects for an amount of $138.4 million. Direct co-financing operations for the purposes of technical cooperation accounted for the remaining $122.2 million, which meant that the UNDP contribution had been multiplied by a factor of 7.6. Taking into account the amount of external resources mobilized directly ($312 million), the amount of UNDP special resources used so far had been multiplied by a factor of nearly 20.

36. The Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Special Plan (A/46/458) highlighted the close interconnection between the progress achieved in the process of peace, democratization and institutional consolidation in Central America and the programmes and projects that were being implemented under the Special Plan. It was also apparent from the report that Central America faced major challenges in the area of economic and social development and the relaunching of the integration process. The Central American countries considered that the Secretary-General's report contained the information needed to evaluate the significant contribution of UNDP to the strengthening of peace and development in Central America. The report highlighted, as part of the strategy of the Special Plan, not only the continuation of the activities already initiated in relation to refugees, returnees and displaced persons, agricultural development, infrastructure, tourism and the strengthening of subregional and national institutions, but also the incorporation of three new priority areas: social development; environment and sustainable management of natural resources; and policies and activities directed to the private sector, particularly to stimulate

(Mr. Mayorga Cortes, Nicaragua)

production sectors, promote investment and technological development and foster external trade in goods and services.

37. His delegation stressed the importance within the context of the Special Plan of the institutional strengthening of the Central American integration bodies; to that end, support was to be provided to the Permanent Secretariat of the General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration so that it could perform the functions assigned to it under the Special Plan in respect of the modernization of macroeconomic policies, the intensification of Central American integration, including trade, and the coordination of international cooperation.

38. Without underestimating the importance of all the projects approved by the Special Plan, it was worth stressing the importance of other initiatives taken concurrently with the implementation of the Special Plan. One of the most significant had been the allocation amounting to ECU 120 million made by the European Community to contribute to the reactivation of interregional trade flows. Mention should also be made of coordination in the field of health between the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

39. In few parts of the world was it as clear as in Central America that there was a process of transition from conflict to cooperation, and from war and violence to dialogue, which constituted a transition to peace, democracy and development. In order to place that situation in its proper perspective, figures could be quoted from a report submitted recently in Panama by a UNICEF consultant at a seminar on the social dimensions of adjustment in Central America. In that report it was indicated that over the past decade some 160,000 Central Americans had lost their lives in the various armed conflicts that had occurred, while 2 million people had been forced to seek refuge in other countries. Six of every 10 Central Americans went hungry; 57 per cent of the population of working age was unemployed; 40 per cent of the population had no health services; and 52 per cent of children of school age had no access to education. Between 1986 and 1989, the percentage of Central Americans living in poverty had increased from 60 per cent to 76 per cent. The average income of the inhabitants of the Central American isthmus was now 20 per cent lower than in 1978. One in 10 Central American children died before reaching the age of five. Of the nine who survived, six were malnourished. Of the 28.7 million inhabitants of the countries of Central America, 10 million had no access to drinking water, and the situation was particularly serious in the rural areas, where 60 per cent of the population had no drinking water.

40. Together with the regression mentioned earlier, there had been very important achievements, especially in the political arena. All Central American Governments currently in office had been elected in free elections. As well, peace had come to Nicaragua and progress had been made towards settling the conflicts in El Salvador and Guatemala; those events warranted optimism for the future of the subregion. All Central American countries were

(Mr. Mayorga Cortes, Nicaragua)

committed to respecting human rights without exception. The people of Central America were predicating their future actions on those achievements and on the political will to overcome the subregion's economic and social plight, in the hope that the United Nations system and UNDP in particular would provide timely help.

41. Mr. COSTA PEREIRA (Portugal) said that his Government was following with great interest the evolution of the situation in Angola, and hoped that a date would be set very soon for the convening of the round-table conference of donor countries called for in General Assembly resolution 45/233. He welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to send to Angola a high-level mission, in the framework of the Special Relief Programme for Angola, to discuss ways and means of expanding humanitarian assistance to all those in need.

42. The signing of the peace agreement after many years of suffering would, he was sure, pave the way for the economic rehabilitation and development of Angola. Portugal rejoiced at those hopeful signs and looked forward to greater cooperation by the international community and the various United Nations agencies, and hoped that particular attention would be paid to requests of the Angolan authorities, so that the peace process could be consolidated. For its part, Portugal was doing its utmost to assist Angola in various social and economic areas; its official development assistance to Angola the previous year had amounted to more than $10,250,000. Portugal was convinced that the economic development of Angola would have a positive effect on the stability of the whole of southern Africa and hoped that again in 1991 a consensus resolution could be adopted on the item.

43. Ms. CAREY (Bahamas) said that no disaster was entirely "natural" since human activity invariably aggravated their devastating consequences, which were growing and having a serious impact on economic development. Her country, which was an archipelagic State of 700 small islands covering some 100,000 square miles of ocean, was very vulnerable to such things as hurricanes. Although a national committee had been established some time before and had been quick to take emergency measures, it had not yet been possible to fully assess the damage caused by the tropical storm that had just pounded the Bahamas or to determine the exact cost of rehabilitation.

44. Her delegation found the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction indeed timely, as it presented a challenge to the international community to enhance its cooperation to ensure effective mechanisms for disaster mitigation, and provided a unique opportunity to utilize the means readily available to limit, if not eliminate, loss of life and destruction.

45. Regrettably, there were great impediments to improvements in disaster reduction, such as the lack of funds to install, and operate the appropriate equipment and systems. What was required for those impediments to be overcome were technical cooperation and development programmes with emphasis on technology transfer, procurement of equipment and facilities and the development of human resources. In that regard, the Science and Technical

(Ms. Carey, Bahamas)

Committee had been doing commendable work, as had the World Meteorological Organization and UNESCO. It was to be hoped that international scientific and technical organizations would address the priorities of the Decade as they evolved, as such organizations were effective mechanisms to facilitate exchange of specialized knowledge so that the protection effort would be geared not only to providing short-term relief, but also towards long-term preventive measures.

46. Her delegation believed that Member States should be encouraged to establish national committees to promote policy measures related to the Decade. The Government of the Bahamas was fully conscious of the importance of the coordination of a disaster mitigation strategy and, in response to the General Assembly's request, had established a national committee. Moreover, it welcomed the suggestion of the Special High-level Council of the International Decade of bringing together representatives of national committees in a world conference on natural disaster reduction in 1994, which would contribute to the mid-term review of the Decade.

47. A recent Caribbean survey had revealed weaknesses in communication and coordination systems and the need to build an effective disaster-preparedness capability as an integral part of the regional development strategy. In that regard, her delegation commended the work of the Pan Caribbean Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Project, which had successfully undertaken a variety of initiatives to increase capacity for disaster management, including training of personnel, technical assistance, surveys of vulnerable areas, and improvement of telecommunications systems. The goal of reducing the impact of disasters was a long-term undertaking, and the Bahamas hoped that the activities of the Decade would continue where the project ended in order to capitalize on the trained personnel, the equipment and other facilities in place.

48. The need to protect humanity from the devastating impact of natural disasters was one of the major challenges of the 1990s. It was more pertinent than ever for the United Nations system, in implementing Decade activities, to give higher priority to the integration of disaster prevention into development strategies through the development of specific measures geared to the economic and social circumstances of each country affected. The Bahamas called upon the international community to maintain its efforts in placing the necessary emphasis on pre-disaster preventive planning and, since implementation of Decade activities was only feasible through extrabudgetary resources, as pointed out in General Assembly resolution 44/236, urged that a solution should be found to the problem of funding. Governments must commit themselves to voluntary contributions, and financial institutions, public and private corporations, and non-governmental organizations must all assist in the process if the financing for the Decade, or $3 million per year for the remaining eight years, was to be raised. The achievement of its goals would depend on all nations' decisive action and their ability to work collectively.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.